



H.Res. 557 – Strongly condemning the United Nations Human Rights Council for ignoring severe human rights abuses in various countries, while choosing to unfairly target Israel by including it as the only country permanently placed on the Council's agenda

Floor Situation

H.Res. 557 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative John Campbell (R-CA) on July 19, 2007. The bill was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs whereupon the Committee agreed to allow the legislation to be considered under suspension of the rules.

H.Res. 557 is expected to be considered by the House of Representatives on September 25, 2007.

Summary

H.Res. 557 strongly condemns the United Nations Human Rights Council for ignoring severe human rights abuses in other countries, while choosing to unfairly target Israel.

H.Res. 557 strongly urges the Council to hold special sessions to address other countries where human rights abuses are being committed, adopt real reform as was intended for the Council when it replaced the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, and reaffirm the principle of human dignity consistent with the original intent envisioned at the Council's establishment.

Additionally, this legislation also strongly urges the United States to make every effort in the General Assembly to ensure that the Council lives up to its mission to protect human rights around the world, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/251 establishing the Council.

Background

Article II of Chapter I of the United Nations Charter states that “[t]he Organization is based on the principles of sovereign equality of all its members.”

The former United Nations Human Rights Commission was widely discredited for its incessant attacks against Israel and for granting membership to Cuba, Zimbabwe, China, Saudi Arabia, and other countries that were notorious human rights violators.

The United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to adopt a resolution establishing the Human Rights Council, stating that “members elected to the Council shall uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights.”

In the past year that the United Nations Human Rights Council has been in existence, the Council has held four special sessions to address pressing human rights situations.

Of those four sessions, three were condemning Israel for their possible human rights abuses in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and in Lebanon, and the fourth special session was a non-condemnatory expression of “concern” regarding the situation in Darfur, Sudan.”

During its fifth session, the Human Rights Council voted to make Israel the only country permanently included on its agenda.

United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon said he was “disappointed at the Council's decision to single out only one specific regional item, given the range and scope of allegations of human rights violations throughout the world.”

Cost

At the time of printing the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) had not scored this legislation.

Staff Contact

For questions or further information contact Luke Hatzis at (202) 226-2302.